

8 Polit. Pamphlet vol 724

A MODEST
ADDRESS
TO THE
COMMONS
OF
GREAT BRITAIN,

And in particular to the
FREE CITIZENS
OF
LONDON;
OCCASIONED

By the ill Success of our present NAVAL
WAR with *France*, and the Want
of a MILITIA BILL.

*Gentle Ways are first to be used, and it is best, if the Work can
be done by them: it is good to use Supplications, Advices, and
Remonstrances; but it must not be left undone if they fail.*

SYDNEY'S Dis. on Gov. Ch. III. § 40.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. SCOTT, at the *Black-Swan* in
Pater-noster-Row. MDCCCLVI.

[Price Sixpence.]

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A M O D E S T
A D D R E S S, &c.

G E N T L E M E N,

THE prosperous administration of public affairs in popular governments has often given occasion to ambitious statesmen to gloss over the most dangerous attempts, which they take hold of, and opportunity from, the peoples inattention, to contrive against the Soul of the Constitution, which is Public Liberty, whilst the honor of a nation may be the theme of every tongue, and founded in all mens ears to the uttermost parts of the earth.

This neglect of measures is not always to be attributed to universal approbation from the majority of mankind, nor to a want of discernment in the honestest part at the very time, of the true state of matters; but it is to be ascribed to the temper, and high-spirited ferment into which mens minds are cast by prosperity; by which they are so far deluded from the immediate pursuit of their real good, that when they are disposed to follow it, the opportunity is past, and nothing more is left but fruitless lamentation of their former supineness, and forgetfulness of the public concerns.

It is true indeed, every nation that is well governed, ought to preserve, and maintain at all times, the highest veneration for good governors, who in the

exercise of all power, study only to perform the just ends of their institution. Nay, it is but candid to incline, as far as ever appearances will admit, to forbearance in our censures of the conduct of men in high stations; and farther, it is decent to think, speak, and act towards them on all common occasions, with superior deference and more than ordinary respect.

But this case is totally different when the rulers of a people are filled with follies and vices of every kind; when from their corruption of manners, and the insensible encroachments of M——s, most dangerous mischiefs, and almost incurable usurpations of ill acquired power, threaten destruction to a free-born people.

Whenever this proves to be the case, from the changes of times, the A———n strengthens itself by collusive practices with the worst and weakest of men, and sets up for some a real, for others an imaginary interest, which is distinct from, or contrary to the public good: every attempt at such a time to give people a right way of thinking in these matters, is laughed to scorn by parasites and traitors to their country; and the honest authors of any counsel to the people, setting forth, or barely hinting at what is necessary to be done for redress of grievances, are exposed to calumny and danger of prosecution from the M——r, who artfully gives the hard names of Sedition and Faction to whatsoever is first moved for the preservation of the people, and the recovery of their rights.

But though the risk is great in such times as I have been describing, to excite a people to make minute inquiries into the mal-administration of public trusts, yet when a nation is abandoned by men of the greatest integrity, fortitude, forecast and prudence, to a junto of such as are destitute of all manly virtues, and when the leaders are found to invert

Themistocles's

Themistocles's art, by which a little city might become great, and in its stead to reduce a great and mighty people to the very brink of ruin. When by the crimes of A———n not only the well-being of a great country is at stake, but that it is even a doubtful question, whether any liberty may afterwards subsist, or a public concern find existence at any rate, by reason of the impending ruin, which may threaten to abolish the life of all public concern, *Liberty* itself.

Whenever this is manifestly the case of any State, it would be treason of the blackest hue, and most horrid nature; not directly indeed against any one particular branch of a mixed government, but involving all at once in common ruin, that must follow, and soon overtake each part; to be silent, inactive, and unconcerned, or to acquiesce patiently in the detestable causes of such misfortunes: when things are brought to such a pass, they must soon perish alike, who lie still, and who unmanfully submit through servile fear; and they can but perish, but with infinitely more honour to themselves, who are, above all others, most active to repel, whilst they have life, hands, arms, and courage to use them, every unjust usurpation of ill-gotten power, which may have overthrown the antient foundations of any well-regulated constitution.

But general declamation was not the design of addressing myself to you at this time. I shall therefore confine myself, in the sequel of these sheets, to delineate a general sketch of our own public affairs at this particular juncture, and trace them from their apparent source, so far as may be a necessary clue in conducting the inquiry: at the same time I shall strive to animate every well-disposed reader to give all manner of assistance, by acting the part every individual has it constitutionally in his power to comply with; that this country, formerly famed for
Arms

Arms and Virtue, may retrieve the tarnished honor, and fading lustre of the *British* name.

I pretend only to draw the out-lines of this picture at present; for it requires the hand of a perfect master to fill up with proper colorings the defects here observable by a judicious eye; moreover, a certain suspense about particular important events, induces me at this time to speak with modesty about uncertainties, which (God grant may never have existed, or that they) may prove abortive in the womb of Time: and I would farther avoid the propagation of faction, and ill-grounded fears, as these only tend to corrupt and destroy the happiness of a people, and never to encourage them to undertake any thing manly or great, in order to emancipate themselves from whatever difficulties they may be plunged into.

In the first place then, it is requisite to consider, that the unavoidable necessity of a *French* war has subsisted ever since that strange patchwork, and inglorious peace made at *Aix la Chapelle*, where, to say nothing of *secret* Articles at present, our right and title to all *Nova Scotia*, and the settlements upon the river *Ohio*, were left, under vague and unsettled definitions of words, to the precise limitation and adjustment of Commissaries appointed on each side between us and the *French*; whose private interest it manifestly was, from the advantage of their temporary places, to prolong the time of concluding their respective commissions, and to raise new doubts upon every slight and frivolous pretext, in order to enhance their own gains, and to give our unceasing and restless enemies thereby, just breathing-time sufficient to ripen their long-concerted projects, to exterminate with fire and sword all our pretensions upon these tracts of countries, which in *France* our Commissaries were at that time negotiating about at their leisure.

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This design of the enemy was laid open and proclaimed to the House of Commons, the beginning of the Session in 1754, in the clearest and strongest manner, by one noble Lord*, whose honest counsel was then rejected: and I well remember his masterly eloquence, and just predictions of what has since that time literally befallen this nation, were treated by the ministerial Advocates then present, as the visionary refinements of a splenetic Politician, which existed no where else but in his own fanciful imagination. And they had even the presumption to give out, that what he suggested was never once designed by the *French*. Such was the treatment this discerning Patriot met with, for asserting in Parliament, what, within a short month, it appeared to every member, the Ministry knew at that very time; and which, in the natural and constitutional course of business, required the most deliberate provision of the great Council of this Nation then assembled.— But instead of that cautious and constitutional way of proceeding, as it were, distracted with fears of some sudden disaster, and new unheard-of design, the nation is alarm'd by a message from the Crown, and the Commons are informed by Authority, that a large embarkation of troops, and warlike preparations, were carrying on in *France* for North America. The Commons returned the warmest and most loyal answer to this message, and promise to fulfil all that his Majesty, (*i.e.* his M——s) shall think expedient to disburse on this occasion.

This practice, it is plain, was setting out in the very beginning of the war, with the pernicious methods formerly so destructive to this country, of doling away the public money to Favorites of the A———n. And it was resolved, in consequence of this intelligence, to send indeed a Fleet, though inferior in number of ships to the *French*, even after their

* Lord E——t.

their departure from *Europe*, to seek, or (to have it believed they meant) to meet with them, in the thick mists and haizy fogs off *Newfoundland*, rather than break through the ridiculous Punctilio of attacking them in *Europe*; where, if orders were not positive to the contrary, the nation would much more have been assured of success from the same Fleet under the gallant Admiral *Boscawen* and his Officers, who, in spite of the disadvantages they lay under of climate, by what they vigilantly did, shewed they meant to force the enemy to a favourable conclusion of all differences.

I shall possibly one day or other have occasion to shew the Nation more particularly what is due to this brave and prudent man, not only as an Admiral aboard the Fleet, but as a Statesman in council; particularly his advising the sending away from the Bay of *Fundy* all the *French* neutrals who threatned, not publicly, but yet with great confidence, to destroy the much labored and expensive settlement of *Nova Scotia*.

But to return to the Fleet off *Newfoundland*, by which every thing was done that the circumstances of that ill-chosen scene of action could permit; the differences, however, between us and the *French* were not doomed to be so terminated. This nation was justly incensed at the encroachments and cruelties of the enemy and their emissaries; so that whatever sums of money should be asked, were sure to be granted, whilst the people were in this mood. The harvest was now growing ripe for Money-lenders and Jobbers; and Place-men and Pensioners, like a flight of *Egyptian* locusts, were found without number ready for devouring the spoil. In compliance with whose advice, and selfish persuasions, and to satisfy a set of men who were to be greatly interested in the plunder and rapine, which by war they expected to share, and which, how notorious soever it might be, they

they hoped their interest in a certain place would screen at any rate : it was therefore resolved, at ten times the expence of Provincials raised on the spot, and inured to the climate, to send hence a body of regular Soldiers, under *Braddock*, into *North America*; who failing of all success, so far, that they were totally routed by a handful of invisible Savages, who took advantage of the most pernicious supineness and fatal negligence of the General, though himself remarkable for severity of discipline at home, yet in the field he shewed an absolute ignorance of every qualification of a good Officer, and brought an indelible reproach upon our national regular troops. But great as was the mortification of *Braddock's* particular friends at his want of conduct, another set of men were no less disappointed, who expected him to advance the deep-projected reformation of our *American* colonies by a military government, subjecting them all under such salutary laws as reforming Soldiers have, in all similar circumstances, imposed.— This principal object, that the projectors had primarily in view, lay indeed concealed a while from public notice; but, like many other specious appearances, when closely examined, betrayed the foul designs which the abettors of these schemes had principally set their hearts upon. But by what appeared to the leaders themselves, soon after they landed in *America*, they discover'd things not yet quite complete for the execution of all the Ministerial Purposes; and the cries of the *Americans* prevailed so far, that a few Militia-men were raised and marched into the field to pacify the *Americans*; by whose bravery, and the good conduct of their new-made General, the ill success of our regulars under *Braddock* was in part repaired; for it is universally acknowledged, that Sir *William Johnson's* superior industry, sagacity, and genius for war, preserved the greatest part of *North America*, for a while at least, by driving away

the *French* regulars, and taking their General prisoner, after *Braddock's* defeat. But, baffled and disgraced in the *Americans* esteem as our regular forces were, and greatly successful as the despised raw militia fought, yet the cant and language of every Courtier has been uniformly the same, before as well as since, that you are not to trust the people of *America*, any more than those at home, in their own defence; notwithstanding a great part of the former are trained properly to arms, and impatient of every restraint imposed on them by the introduction of mercenary Soldiers. Yet Soldiers are to be the destined instruments, and new forces are therefore sent, with another General, who, in all probability, has been delayed here so long, that nothing material can be expected from that command this year. But it can be no secret, that if *Americans* only were to be employed in this service, there would be no plea for the extension of the baneful influence of martial laws over these free men; and with proper supplies of money, which is the most necessary to them, the Contractors, Agent-Victuallers, Jobbers, Commissaries, Remitters, with all the other tribes of Harpies upon this devoted country at home, would be cut off from their new-contrived means of exorbitant plunder. And other reasons subsisted against the full extent of the grand scheme to humble this nation, by impoverishing it of wealth too soon; for war with *France*, whenever it was declared, was like to be of long continuance, and therefore it was expedient to raise the supplies of the current year as cheap as possible, that the nation might not grow sick of the expence too soon. So that whenever Subscriptions slacken'd at the Bank, the word went forth from on high, and all were compelled to come in, who had either any hopes or fears. And by this forced Subscription of Two Millions, with the Land-Tax at Four Shillings per Pound, the exigencies of the current

current year, amounting to near Seven Millions, were supposed to be provided for most liberally.

But this was not all the public was expected to supply, as upon the last message by a certain great O——r to the C——s, it was thrown out in a most unconstitutional manner, that it might be presumed, if the sum of a Million or more should be farther wanting for the current service, all deficiencies would be cheerfully made up in due season.

But for all the mighty expence we have been at by sea and land; let us now attend a little to what has been already done answerable to the mighty parade of preparations so formidable in words; Why, in the first place it was fashionable in every company, and at every coffee-house in town, to applaud the remarkable diligence used in your naval affairs; and by the prodigious numbers of his Majesty's ships put into commission, from that time the *Blandford* Man of War was taken till the 17th of *May* last, when war was declared, the public was so elated with confidence in our supposed superiority, that no man dared to suggest the necessary cautions about our Enemy's Fleet any where else than in the channel; and in collusion with the people's apprehension, an insignificant number, when compared to the list in commission of our ships of war, were sent off *Brest*, and to parade it away in the *British* channel; but, instead of attacking the *French* ships of war, they took all the stinking fish, and whatever other merchantmen came in their way; and farther, to satisfy the clamors and expectations of the populace, Admiral *Hawke* is stationed, with a Fleet sufficient for once, off *Brest*, in order to intercept the enemy's return into their own harbors from the cruize they had been on, successfully to convoy their outward bound merchants ships.

But it was the ill fate, in a second instance of this country, that in the most critical time, the watch-

ship so stationed, that by obeying orders, she must necessarily have descryed, in a few hours, every motion of the enemy's fleet, and might have brought on a general engagement with the enemy and assured victory, with *Hawke* and his Fleet well manned on our side, if the Commander had not pretended, or believed he found a necessity, to quit his station, from the bare silly report of his Carpenter alledging, that the mast was disabled.

Upon the Commander's arrival, the disappointed Nation expected to see some punishment adequate (if possible) to so grievous a misdemeanor, or degradation at least, for his wretched ill-judged conduct. But instead of vengeance for the wrongs of an injured people, a Court-Martial honorably acquits him, though not altogether without blame, and brings in the Carpenter incapable, for the future, to serve his country in any station whatsoever*. The Captain however, as a reward for past good services, as well in the senate as by his sword, is since that promoted to the dignity of the *British* Flag: but our wise Rulers at the helm steer equally well, *tam Marte quam mercurio*.

Now after all our so much boasted superiority at sea, and after the prodigious numbers of ships long since put into commission, for which the nation will expend Four Millions and upwards this year; and after a dissipation of the other immense treasures provided by Parliament, amounting in all to Seven Millions and upwards; and after the enemy had been publicly, with our own certain knowledge, carrying on a large embarkation of troops, and all military preparations at *Toulon*, for three months and upwards; but not a week before the *French* had actually landed, by our *Gazette* accounts, Eleven Thousand men at *Citadella*, was a Squadron of *English* men

* When you turn your eyes (says *Demosthenes* to his degenerate countrymen) to the wretched state of your affairs, you bring your Generals to a trial; you grant them leave to speak; you hear the necessities they plead, and then acquit them.

men-of-war dispatched for the relief of the garrison in *St Philip's Castle*: and *Byng*, an untried man, who never had once seen an action in all his life, forces himself into this employ, and takes the command of this Squadron; which, even when it sailed from *England*, was known to be much inferior to the enemy's Fleet both in strength and number.

Thus did our wise *Polonius* at home risque, from the *beginning*, the relief of that important fortress, (for I would avoid to say of this country) to the precarious success of a weaker fleet, under a raw Commander, not even sufficiently provided with the ordinary requisites for a sea engagement.

For whatever the public now ascribes to Mr *E——*, &c. who joined the ten ships *Byng* sailed with hence for *Mahon*, yet it is notoriously owing to Mr *Blakeney's* inflexibility in his own right way, and reluctance to give up any undue part of the command, that Mr *E——* sailed away, disgusted, for *Gibraltar*; whilst the the creatures of *A——*n were here defending his continuance, pent up in *Mahon* harbour, as the only right and wise conduct on his part.

But in this place it may not be impertinent to advert a little to the unparalleled neglect of our naval forces in the *Mediterranean*, and especially at *Port Mahon*; long after hostilities had been commenced on both sides, that important place, it was but natural to suppose, ought to have had a Squadron of men of war stationed before it, with ships able to protect the honor and trade of this kingdom at all times in the *Mediterranean*.

For before the peace of *Aix la Chapelle* we might have maintained as numerous a Fleet as would answer all our purposes at *Gibraltar* or *Port Mahon*, without offence to any neighboring state. But since that memorable æra *Great Britain* has acted as if she were debarred these natural rights, and as if only permitted, by courtesy, to keep an insignificant number of line of battle ships in these seas in time
of

of peace: for how else can we account for Mr E—'s being sent there at all with so few ships under him, even before any preparations of war were making in Europe. But others besides the treaty of Aix have to answer it to the nation, and I hope will one day be called upon for reasons; why so very few *British* ships of the line were cruising off *Mabon* many months after the capture of the *Blandford* man of war? And why, when *Minorca* was threatened openly with an invasion from the enemy full three months and upwards, to our own public knowledge, no additional reinforcement was sent, till *Byng* sailed with a Fleet much inferior to the enemy, and uncertain of being joined by Mr *Edgecumbe*? And all this while it is a well known fact, not controverted by those who could have denied, if untrue, a noble Lord's assertion in Parliament, that we had Thirty-six thousand seamen, of the Forty thousand granted, returned to the proper Officers before the beginning of *February* last.

But it may be deemed invidious to run the parallel minutely at this time between the situation of our neighbors and us; and the conditions exacted from the *Carthaginians* by their rivals the *Romans*, when they prohibited them, for the future, from putting to sea with any more than a very small number of ships, but obliged them to burn and destroy the rest which formerly had been a terror unto them.

“Ye should have wept (says *Hannibal* to a time-serving *Carthaginian*) when ye gave up your ships
“and elephants, and when ye bound your own hands
“from the use of arms, without the good leave of
“the *Romans* first obtained. This miserable state
“keeps us under, and holds us in assured servitude.”

The state of *Carthage* could not survive many years that fatal concession; and *Great Britain* will mourn too late *Minorca*, &c. lost and surrender'd from that neglect, on our part, to fit out a superior Fleet in the

the

the *Mediterranean*; as every A——n formerly, was wont to do, whenever the flames of war were kindled against us in *Europe*.

But, without any friendship or partiality to Mr. Byng, it is reasonable to allege what may be collected from the naval history of this country, that nothing of great moment was ever done decisive in our favor by an engagement upon equal terms with an enemy's Fleet in the *Mediterranean*; though we could possibly disable many of them in fight, yet the advantages they have over us in putting into any neighboring port and presently refitting, are of great consequence to them; whilst we have a tedious and uncertain voyage to make after a sea fight there, and cannot so easily provide or transport naval stores necessary for refitting in a short time, as they can do; for which reason we ought never to trust to so near an equality of numbers; but this would be a matter (no doubt) of serious consideration to determine every brave and wise commander not to hazard too much against a manifest superiority, especially if the enemy's Fleet consisted principally of stout, new and clean ships, and his own had been exposed to a long voyage, which makes the ships foul and seamen sickly, from long and close confinement, and salt diet.

But this reflection necessarily leads one to advert upon the palpable and flagrant neglect of the A——n, which is so far culpable, as they were ignorant of the true number of the *Toulon Squadron*, as they now pretend: for if they knew better, which is most likely to appear afterwards they did at that time, the charge will come stronger against other people than Mr. Byng: why the public was made to believe the *French Fleet* at *Toulon* consisted of no more than Eight ships of the line, when Twelve new ships actually sailed with *Galissoniere*; and this was so well known to Mr. Byng, before he sailed hence, that

though

though he had earnestly solicited that command in the beginning, upon the presumption and assurances of his Fleet being superior to the enemy; yet, two days or more before his departure, he lamented to his friends his own inevitable ruin or disgrace, if not the loss of the Fleet under him; for being sent with an insufficient force to conquer the enemy, whose superiority, when fully known (it is said) render'd a closer attack upon them unsafe and precarious. What then must the nation think of an Admiral inattentive or regardless of the above, as well as the following facts? By a list of *French* ships under *Gallissoniere*, a great majority of them appear, from the *French* register of their marine, in several private hands in *London*, to have been actually new built since the year 1747, and upon a new model, and in a manner of constructing the same rated ships different from the usage of former times; in which last model, all the Cannon of the various orders of ships are cast of a larger calibre, insomuch that a new-built sixty four gun ship, upon the *French* model, carries weight of metal as great, and is capable of attacking any force, that their former seventy four gun ships used to do. And by the same alteration of their manner of building their ships, and casting their metal to a greater bore, their seventy four gun ships carry at present the same weight of metal as the ninety gun ships did heretofore. And every seaman knows, that a large ship of war is proportionably stronger, and capable of much more execution, in a line of battle, than a number of small ships all together, though the number of guns of the smaller vessels should exceed those in the large one. That I may not be misunderstood, I mean to shew, that a vessel of eighty four guns, with her complement of men, and every other thing else as well provided within herself, is more than a match for a fifty gun ship and a forty gun ship attacking her together, as well

well manned and provided according to their own respective rates, and so proportionally of other strong-built vessels. Wherefore it is self-evident, that the success of any naval engagement between two fleets ought not to be expected merely from the superior number of guns in one of them, but ought to happen (if all other things in both fleets are nearly on a par) in favor of that, whose weight of metal is upon the whole the greatest.

By an examination of this kind, it will turn out, that though the sum total of guns in our fleet exceeded the *French* by upwards of fifty, yet the enemy was, from the forementioned circumstances, much stronger than *Byng* when they met, and much more so than when he left *England*. And the assurance of this fact, was enough to make him too late lament his own hard fate, and even in a braver man than *Byng*, might have been apt to beget a timorous and dastardly spirit, and to propagate the same among others, who in a short time participated of his counsels, of the same irresolution and faint-heartedness; for such a spirit appears to have possessed them all in some degree, by the extracts of *Byng's* letter published in the *Gazette*: though it is possible it may hereafter appear, he wrote very much more than was ever yet published, vindicating the motives of his own conduct. But may it not be asked, whether the contents are not secreted from the public notice, the better to screen the errors and misconduct of other people? who, finding the nation with great reason enraged at such mal-a——n, may possibly judge it expedient to offer some expiatory sacrifice for their own sins to a brave people, justly incensed and provoked.

It is from these omissions in the out-set, not to dwell upon the want of Fire-ships and Naval Stores in *Byng's* fleet, that the judgment of all our General Officers seems to have been confounded and pervert-

ed at *Gibraltar*; and to this cause principally it is, we ought to refer all our past misfortunes; as a stone cast into a pond occasions many waves, and thereby the calm element becomes so ruffled at a distance, that all objects appear in it awhile disordered and confused: so this infatuation of our counsels at home, plunged the General Officers of the Army, as well as some of the Navy, from one mistake into another, the farther they were withdrawn from the first cause, till all of them appear to have been bewilder'd and absorbed in that panick, which is too well known to have been almost universal in the councils at *Gibraltar*, and afterwards. What may be the consequence of this shameful mock-fight in the *Mediterranean* is yet uncertain; whether it is *G——r* or *P——b* which is the next devoted object: but bravery, skill, and every other requisite of good commanders, were found almost unparallel'd in our days in *Blakeney* and *Jefferys*, yet *Portmahon*, alas! no longer belongs to the dominion of *Great Britain*. Want of a sufficient Garrison, and scarcity of many other requisites there, made the measure justifiable to give up the castle, that after three desperate assaults, and as many repulses on our mens sides, is now in the hands of the enemy; who, 'tis probable, will know how to set a due value on it; tho' it is plain we acted at home as if we all along did not; or thought we might substitute some equivalent for it, when they think proper to make a peace. And now let dispassionate people of all denominations ask themselves candidly, Would a whig *A——n* in *Queen Anne's* days have given up *Port Mahon*? Or durst even the Tories, culpable as they are even to this day allowed to have been, venture on so bold a step? And shocking as the consideration is, will it not occur to ask, if all our present *A——n* had agreed with the enemy to embrace such measures as would most effectually ruin and
distress

distress our affairs, could they with their own safety have done more than has already happened?

But if we may be allowed to anticipate the fate of *Byng*, even upon the evidence of his own letter, (if a part may be admitted instead of the whole) though he be universally blamed by every one, yet from what has often happened heretofore, not quite indeed in similar cases, for no parallel of such can any where be found; yet, as Court-Martials have usually been managed, it is not improbable, that one will be selected, which will find evidence clear enough in his favor to acquit this honorable Commander of every just imputation of blame. But though the supreme Court of the nation should take up the inquiry in an apparent high manner, have we any grounds to expect, from the known v——y and p——n of the present age; and from the very insignificant numbers of the honest party, compared to the many who are corrupted among the great; and especially from what passed last war before the House; when two Commanders, by shameful neglect of duty, involved us in a *French* war, and yet each died with impunity: is there, I say, any good ground to suppose, without the thunder of the people's voice against this strange behaviour in him; that a man of Mr *Byng's*, and the rest of that memorable unanimous Council's connections and p——y interests, will suffer any farther disgrace or punishment, than the hearty harmless imprecations of a forlorn people?

But if the general sense of an injured nation were fairly and humbly represented by the City of *London*, and a majority of the Boroughs in *Great Britain*, before Parliament, and if they should petition for a fair impartial inquiry into the state of this nation, in order to obtain redress of grievances, and punishment of the authors, however exalted in Station and Dignity, and whoever they may happen to be.

There is not any room to doubt, but the attention of all would be awakened properly from that Court-Lethargy, by which most individuals are render'd deaf and insensible to the silent heart-murmurings, which more than three fourths of this nation still pour forth against all, who wickedly design the ruin of their liberties. For the Commons of these once-happy realms, in their collective capacity, have ever maintained, and God forbid they should not, as often as they see occasion, exercise a power to represent their grievances to Parliament, and petition from every County as well as Borough in *Britain*, to have them redressed. The exercise of this indubitable right, has at all times preserved, and sometimes sav'd them from Slavery. This right of theirs no man can deny, who is a well-wisher or friend to our constitution, and the principles by which the present illustrious Family wears the crown. It is true, in the flattering reign of *Charles* the Second, this right of petitioning was declared against in the House, and by every *Creature* and *Hackney Scribler* about Court, was set forth as dangerous, mutinous, innovating, nay, rebellious; and accordingly, proclamations were issued out to discountenance it; Abhorrences were set on foot to deter the Petitioners, and the whole array of penal Laws was display'd against this equitable exercise of Liberty; but the House of Commons at their first meeting, pass'd a vote, *nem. con.* "That it is ever, and hath been the undoubted right of the subjects of *England*, to petition the King for calling and sitting of Parliaments, and for the redress of Grievances." — "That to traduce such petitioning as a violation of Duty, and to represent it to his Majesty as tumultuous and seditious, is to betray the liberty of the subject, and to contribute to the design of subverting the antient legal constitutions of this kingdom, and introducing arbitrary power."

It appears, by these resolutions of the House of Commons, that this right of the people, the arbitrary tyranny of the *Steuarts* could not suppress; and whatever was even dubious on the side of Liberty before the Revolution, the *Bill of Rights* at that time explained and confirmed. And the better to establish for ever after, and to preserve inviolably this contested right belonging to the people, Sir *Francis North*, a great man of the law in those times, and, like others of his profession, an enemy to liberty, for his attempts to stretch Prerogative in the Crown, was impeached, as well as Sir *Francis Withens*, a Member of Parliament, who was sentenced upon his knees, and expelled the House, for opposing the subjects undoubted right to petition for *redress of Grievances*. For the principles which contain so much natural equity, are not to be destroyed by power, nay, not by concession itself.

But to return to the farther consideration of the present state of this country: It is well known, that every thing, during his *****'s last absence in his — dominions, continued as unsettled in the determinations of the ***** as they had been before his departure; for each particular Member, *but one*, was obliged to cede in part his own opinions to a determination of a majority of the C——; nothing but Faction took place, and each of the Junto consider'd more how to preserve his own footing secure, and to enlarge his own power with artifices, than to annoy effectually the public enemy. But at length the happy return of his ***** to his *British* dominions, procured a short truce to their domestic feuds, and intestine divisions, and at an expence of about *an Hundred and twenty thousand* Pounds sterling to be paid by the nation, to satisfy in part one man's ambition, the cards were newly shuffled, tho' nothing of consequence was got by the new taking in. For the A———n acquired no new strength by transpos-
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ing their great Officers; for 'twas after they had tender'd in vain their proposals to one Nobleman, and another great Man, who, from mere honesty in adhering uniformly to their own sentiments, rejected every plan of union which was offered, if they would heartily cooperate with measures newly projected. By which means, another, high before in office, but turbulent in every place, whilst ever another stood higher than himself, thrusts into that exalted station with a bare half-faced good-will to those who upon compulsion admitted him so far, and in his first step betrays the completion of his arbitrary designs to take the conduct of the House of C——s. This unwary step his well-wishers endeavoured to palliate, but could by no means excuse, while the torrent of Oratory was poured out by all against such unconstitutional presumption.

But what the minority in the opposition clamored most against in the beginning of last Sessions, has, luckily for the A———n, turned out to the general satisfaction of this nation. But so far for their honesty must be said, that what they declaimed against was no new temporary doctrine, but only reviving the much-contended opinion of a noble Lord, who formerly had been the idol of this nation, for his opposition to a late wicked Minister. But the M——y had now the advantage over this mistaken honest zeal, so far, that when the *Russian* treaty was confirmed in Parliament, the King of *Prussia* of his own meer accord, offered such terms of accommodation to the Court of *London*, that availing themselves of the conviction, which the declaration of the particulars with *Russia* had carried along with it, the M——y presumed the nation would rejoice in all subsidies, because they were reconciled to one, whereto they had been at first averse. The treaty indeed with *Russia*, a great and powerful nation, was well concerted; and the only object worthy the attention of
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this nation even in her greatest prosperity, which the M — y some how or another have stumbled upon since the preparations for war were begun. But was this a sufficient reason for *Great Britain* to subsidize with *Hesse-Cassel*, *Wolfenbuttle*, and several more petty *German* Princes? And even the *Prussian* Alliance, dazzling as it seemed in appearance, was certainly precipitate and ill-timed, being a measure which was not likely to obtain Peace, but rather to bring on a general War; a measure of necessity estranging the House of *Austria* from her attachment to *Great Britain*; and a measure scattering the seeds of jealousy and animosity against us in all the northern powers, who can have any possible disputes hereafter with that bustling and intriguing monarch. In a word, the *Prussian* Alliance seems to have been ratified only with a view at any expence to keep him a friend to a certain Country in *Germany*, and to protect it from a *French* invasion; and, it may be presumed, was executed in compliance with that part of the A****n, who are satisfied with no higher merit at any time, than to be mere expedient-mongers; who have neither ability nor genius for decisive undertakings of war, and are therefore unstable in councils, and infirm in every purpose, which clashes or interferes with the approbation or sense of their timid and irresolute Junto.

The truth of this reasoning farther appears from the defensive alliance since then concluded between the courts of *Vienna* and *Versailles*, which assuredly could not have taken place, but for this premature step on our part; considering the expence of near *Thirty Millions* this nation had been at last war, the remembrance of which could not have been effaced so soon from the Empress Queen's breast, had she not been compelled to provide resources in her own defence, by a juncture with *France*, in case her own dominions might be attacked by *Prussia*. By this instance

instance we see how well founded is the maxim of balancing the contending powers in time of war; for, says *Polybius*, "that ought never, on any account, to be overlooked; nor ought such a force ever to be thrown into one hand, as to incapacitate the neighbouring states from defending their rights against the more powerful."

Should what has been said be found true, may one not fairly conclude, that the present A———n is made up of giddy, weak, pusillanimous, irregular and inconsistent men; who have each, like the Ape in the fable, just wit enough to do mischief, but all their collected abilities, even if unanimity could overrule their now divided counsels, would scarce furnish capacity to save a depressed nation?

Ever since warlike preparations were made on both sides, let it be asked, What Fleet was ever sent out, off that coast, for the preservation of poor *Ireland*? What security of property have our merchants in our western colonies from a sufficient Fleet of ours there? Have not the Proprietors of the *Leeward Islands* been, in prudence, obliged to insure their effects at great premiums in those places, for want of men of war sufficient in the *West Indies* to protect the Islands from the danger of a *French* invasion? And what adequate defence to the threatened danger have we made for *North America*? How long may we reasonably hope to have any settlements on the *Malabar* coasts? In a word, What success have we had in the execution of any one plan talked of? I will venture to say, notwithstanding the great expence of commissioning so many ships, and the large returns made in *February* last of your seamen, no Fleet, but one, has at any time been sent out equal in numbers to the enemy: we have before mentioned two instances of this neglect; now let us enquire how Mr *Boscawen*'s numbers have stood when compared to the *French*. Towards the end of *May* last

last Fifteen *French* ships of the line fell down into *Brest* water, whilst the *English* Fleet was no more than Eleven men of war of the line, in hourly expectation of meeting the enemy's Squadron with so great an inequality against them: 'tis necessary to admit that the famous Mr *Moslyn* was dispatched so as to join them soon after, with four ships, which barely when they arrived made up an equality to the enemy's number.

Thus the well-being of this country was committed at best to the doubtful event of a Squadron, inferior to the enemy in the proportion of three to four nearly. What infatuation was there then in such counsels? whilst the nation hath been perpetually alarmed, and with reason, for six months past, been taught so far to believe in the rumors spread all over the kingdom, of invasions, and embarkations made against us by the *French*, that we have admitted swarms of Mercenaries and foreign Soldiers into the very heart of this country; and that, instead of intrusting the brave and warlike natives of this island with arms to defend themselves, their Wives, their Children, their Properties, and every thing else, that can be dear to freeborn men. And burdensome and disgraceful as it is for this powerful nation to be defended by such mercenaries, yet if the enemy should think fit to attack us, with all our boasted aid of *H——* and *H——s*, now environing our Capital, it is certain we must still have recourse to the good people of this land for our defence and preservation; unless the *A——n* means to take into their pay half the soldiers of *Germany*, instead of the ships of *Denmark* and *Sweden*, now hired by *France* against us; and when the enemy may be in full march for *London*, these Soldiers are liable to be recalled upon the slightest pretext, or seduced (as men) by a larger subsidy, than our agreement is to pay, for their uncertain

and precarious assistance of fighting for us in the day of trial. But in Parliament we were told, from the highest Authority, Militias are of good institution at particular times, and may at some time be right, yet, that this is not a proper season! And that too many hands for a trading nation, necessary to constitute a sufficient Militia, must neglect their manufactures and occupations; and that the use of arms would create a turbulent and rebellious spirit!

Thus do the quibbles and arts of Lawyers impose such like fallacies and slight sophistry upon the public, who are unable to reason about such matters, and are inattentive to what actually takes place elsewhere. But let any Lawyer of them all say, if he can, that the people of the *Canton of Bern*, with the best constituted Militia in the world, are more tumultuous and turbulent upon *Sundays*, or at any other times, than the laboring people of *England* and *Ireland*: or whether the lower class of people in the *British* dominions are not more profligate, irreligious and debauched in their manners, than the temperate and industrious *Switzers*, or the *Jersey* and *Guernsey* men, who are every *Sunday* under arms, that they may be taught to protect, in safety, and defend what God and nature have bestowed.

But the glosses and comments of Lawyers have in all ages, and in all countries, proved detrimental to the interests of liberty: and to be perfect in the arts of a statesman, says *Harrington*, it is first necessary to be bred a Gentleman, and no Lawyer.

Other people, biassed by the delusion of Authority, are really shallow enough to think it impracticable for a commercial state to exercise its civil functions with good military discipline; so indeed it would be, if there are only a few, as Thirty thousand, permitted to bear arms; but it is impossible to constitute any free government for preservation, within
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the reach of ambitious neighbors, without entrusting the whole people themselves, and not any part separated and distinct from the rest, with the arts of war. I desire to know what security of our property shall be found from our own soldiers, if the people are longer debarred the use of arms? Experience shews us that the more wealth is accumulated by unarmed cowards, it becomes the stronger incitement, and more powerful lure, to the first bold aggressor, who, without any composition, can take away by force either any part or the whole if he pleases: for what were Ten thousand, or as many Millions, of naked and undisciplined men, to a few troops of mercenary soldiers fighting for plunder? and how poor a figure do we make in history, to suffer a handful of Highlanders, last rebellion, to penetrate into the heart of this country, even offended and averse to them as the people in general were, and yet, for want of arms in the hands of your own people, they all fled to be cut off by the standing army? But where were your Trade, your Wealth, or security of Government, if a body of armed mercenaries should urge this, or any thing like it? Gentlemen! Parliaments are exceeding good, but these times are not fit for them, you are to have a little patience; Where were then your Liberty? The constitution of this country, whenever this may be the case, is surely nigh expiring; for arms, sufficient for the protection of us, in the hands of hireling slaves, is the model upon which the superstructures of the *French, German, Turkish*, and all other despotic governments are built.

And as there is no danger so great to contend against, as the exorbitant power of a standing army too numerous, let every *Briton* therefore dispassionately consider the necessity there is, to oppose all farther extension of mercenaries and foreigners at home; and,

instead of such dangerous expedients for our preservation, it behoves every man in this nation to encourage every laudable proposal for a Militia, as the only instrument, under GOD, that can support the present Royal Family on the throne; and preserve the envied happiness of our glorious constitution, which is only a limited monarchy, equally abhorrent of the seditions and anarchy of mere democracies, as it is repugnant to an absolute command in the crown, like what the *French* and other despotic sovereigns have. Let every man now ask himself, If ever a time can exist more pressing for the establishment of a general Militia-Law than now, when the enemy is expected, every hour, to invade some part of this kingdom? Surely this freeborn nation is not secure, whilst she is obliged to live upon the dole or bounty of the K—'s M——y for defence and aid from foreign mercenaries; but it was the wisdom of our Gothick constitution to invest the Commons of this realm, whenever necessity in antient times required it, with the means and instruments of defence to protect themselves; and to repel every attempt, foreign or domestic, to alter the religion and fundamental laws of this kingdom.

Let us therefore no longer be deluded into dangerous security upon your Ten thousand or Twenty thousand foreigners, or upon those standing armies, which appear so magnificent on paper; but let the defence of *Britain* be committed to the natural forces of the state as soon as they can properly be arrayed; for whatever we expected to be done for us by others hath proved against us; and ought to convince the world, by past experience, that all the resource left is in ourselves to withstand and control the insolent ambition of our haughty and presumptuous enemy. Remember, my Countrymen! Oh let us now remember, ere 'tis too late, the fate of *Athens* and of

Rome

Rome: they continued free so long as the sword remained in the hands of their own people, and were then the most glorious of all nations; for whilst this root of Liberty remained, these states could not fail to recover from any disorders; but when numerous armies of foreigners were of appointment, they quickly lost all liberty, and degenerated at once from their former condition, into the most abject servility, and basest adulation of Tyrants, that ever disgraced the history of mankind.

But seeing the first Law of Nature, as well as of Society, is self-defence against every hostility attempted upon the individual, as well as against the body politic, what solecism of Law, or glosses of Statesmen, can delude the Nation from their honorable endeavors to obtain a good Militia-Bill, as soon as ever the Parliament next meets? And how can your baffled Patriots, who gloriously strove tho' in vain last Sessions to obtain this salutary law, answer it to themselves, to you, and to your Children, if they cease to struggle till the A——n is forced to grant it? Sure I am, without a well-regulated Militia-Bill, this nation must soon be undone, beyond all possibility of redemption.

I have endeavored to urge the consideration of the vast importance of a well-regulated Militia-Bill at this time of imminent danger; as all may observe, who are acquainted with antient or modern history, that no people ever gained any remarkable advantage in times of general prosperity; but adversity, like the collision of hard bodies, forces out every spark of fire, which lay concealed within the sluggish mass. It is on such occasions only, that the natural and indelible rights of a people, which have been surreptitiously purloined thro' the abuse of power, can be re-claimed successfully; and at such times, the collective body of a people may,
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by judicious conduct, reassume a legal enforcement of those privileges, which the ambition of arbitrary Statesmen, or the malevolence of Grandees towards the rest of mankind, is prone to withhold as long as they possibly can.

Upon the whole, it is not my purpose to presume to point out at present any particular method of application to so respectable a body of men as compose the City of *London*, or the Commons of *England*; but as a sincere lover of my Country, I recommend it to the consideration of every man who has a vote for Member of Parliament, whether it might not be productive of the greatest general good, to join, each in his respective Borough, and even in their private capacities, as true *Englishmen*, to cause proper application immediately to be made to Parliament, or where it may be most advisable, and humbly to remonstrate the apparent causes of our present melancholy situation, and to pray most earnestly, that the Authors and Abettors of all wrongs done to this poor country may be brought to condign punishment; and not be permitted to skreen the mal-practices committed both in ***** and ***** by substituting men of straw for the people to reak their just vengeance upon. And as the only security for the lasting freedom of this nation, loaded with its present dishonor, let those in the A———n be pressed to shew all due countenance to some well-concerted salutary Militia-Law, by which this brave and free-born people may be emancipated from the terrors of a numerous standing Army, consisting of mercenary foreigners, as well as domestic fl—s for life.

All or most of the honefter people in high life, observing the depravity of manners, and that corruption which has infected like a contagion all orders of men, unanimously agree on mature deliberation, that such a time may come, when no salvation can arise
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from any other resources than from the body of the whole People themselves; if upon a most dispassionate inquiry, the ship should now be found to have entrusted her safety to unskilful pilots, should she in prudence be any longer exposed to the contending elements with such weak and unskilful managers? Let every man, who is not abject enough to discard all concern for his Country, ask, without prejudice or favor to any, whether we have an A———n that has shewed Prudence, Forecast, and Integrity, sufficient to protect the dominions of this Country?— and if they have not, what is best legally to be done? For G O D's sake, let us conscientiously inquire within ourselves, before it is too late, whether our dear Country ever so much stood in need of mature counsels, and firm resolutions, as at the present juncture?

But the dignity and wisdom of the city of *London* exceeds all the rest of this nation, as much as her trade, opulence and grandeur are superior: the credit therefore and weight of a suitable Address from them will avail more, and tend more immediately to promote among all the Boroughs a proper and general application to obtain a happy issue to their requests, from whatever power in the legislature it is to be made, or in whatever manner it is to be carried on. Nothing but a most fervent and unshaken love for my country, and zeal for the happy preservation of the crown in the present Royal Family, induces me to have been at the trouble of writing so much upon this occasion. For I am fully perswaded, if this much-wanted spirit of inquiry were promoted by those numbers, and by the subscription of proper names to a Petition, for redress of grievances, it might be conducted to the reformation of this country, without undue heat of passion, but still with zeal and intrepid resolution. The subject of this Petition would contain matter
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of such high dignity, as the very freedom and preservation of Liberty in this nation : and if the whole collective body of the Commons, after the example of this illustrious City, should become plaintiffs for the manifold wrongs which have been committed against the honor and happiness of *England*, by servants of the C****, some expiatory sacrifice of a great M——l offender should be made constitutionally, who, in fact, ought to bear the blame of our late losses and disgrace ; for it is altogether frivolous and childish, and only worthy the meer vulgar, to transfer it upon inferior and subordinate agents only ; but to strike at the root of the evil at once, in a legal manner, might atone to this generous people, whose genius is to love the mildest exercise of power and punishments ; and if any other person, by over-rating himself where none could contradict, has engrossed too much power, for the discharge of which he is disqualified by want of abilities and genius, it might be sufficient to remove, at once, such weak counsellors from before the throne, and to set up Wisdom in high places ; for that state cannot long subsist that compensates a M——s evil actions with favors and rewards ; or so much as grants impunity to the most dangerous crimes in remembrance of any past services whatever.

I must once more beg leave to remind you, that, according as your spirit is exerted upon this critical juncture, you will either break the iron chains of impending bondage, or seal the doom of slavery, if not for yourselves, yet assuredly for your Posterity. Remember therefore, you have it now in your power, and are answerable if you do not give them the best security for happiness, by a vigorous exertion of spirit in maintenance of rights to petition for redress of grievances, and for privileges derived from your ancestors ; which if the times abuse, and the late vio-
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lation of your country's honor cannot now move you to resent, as well as the wretched prospect of posterity which these times afford of fading Glory, diminished Power, and of decaying national Happiness; if these, I say, prove weak motives to determine my Countrymen at this time, to act that part which is the only thing left for them legally to undertake, words, however eloquent, will not hereafter have power to engage you, nor will any sense of national Virtue ever excite you to shake off your bonds. —

“ For that people, says *Sydney*, must certainly per-
 “ ish, who tamely suffer themselves to be oppress-
 “ ed, either by the Injustice, Cruelty, or Malice of
 “ an ill Magistrate.”

But let me intreat, that if I have written with unusual boldness, before I am condemn'd by any, let them only dispassionately consider how much truth there is in what has been said, and that 'tis from a sincere intention only to rescue from perdition, as much as I can, my native country.

If after all that has been said the body of the people of *Britain* is already so corrupted in manners, and that all sense of public Virtue, and love and desire, for the preservation of Liberty is already extinguished, then will they not only abandon every laudable and praise-worthy undertaking, of this or any other kind; but, far from designing any manly attempt to rescue themselves from what hangs over them at this instant like a thunder-cloud, big with unknown mischiefs, they will suffer the propagators of the foregoing doctrine to be exposed to all the dangers which despised Honesty meets from Vice triumphant; and some of these, we have learned from the history of an abandon'd people in former days, are nothing short of abuse, hatred, persecution, or death itself.

"Now," said a Patriot of old, I call heaven to wit-
E "ness,

“ness, it would not surprise me, though I should
 “suffer, even by this People, more by displaying
 “their wretched condition, than the very men who
 “have involved them in it. But whatever fate at-
 tends me as an individual, my only satisfaction is to
 have sounded the alarm, lest a violent convulsion
 fit should seize, and suddenly destroy, after the ex-
 ample of past ages, a misguided and ruined People,
 with their devoted Country.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Fellow-Servant,

